



# From August 2023 (Volume 139)

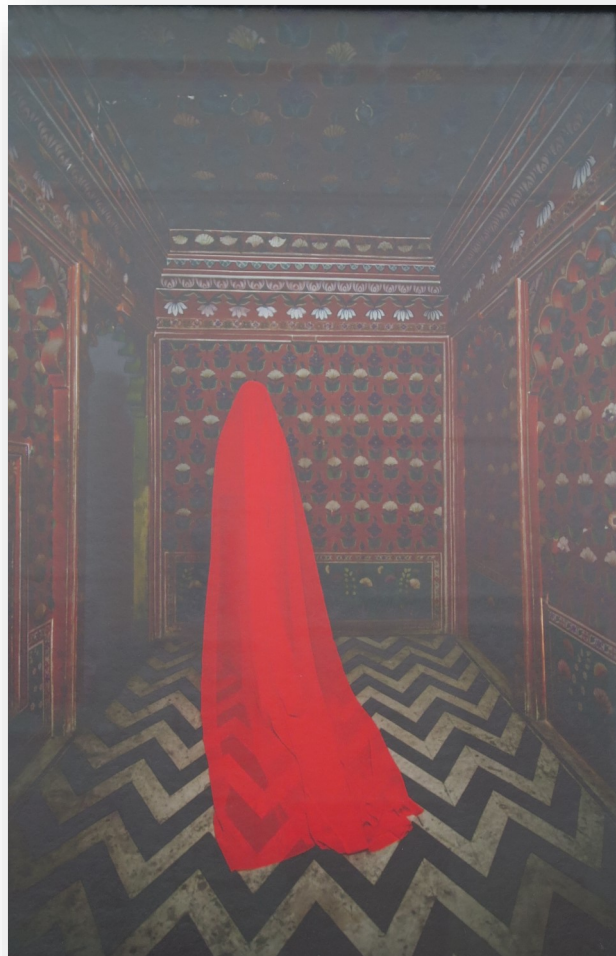




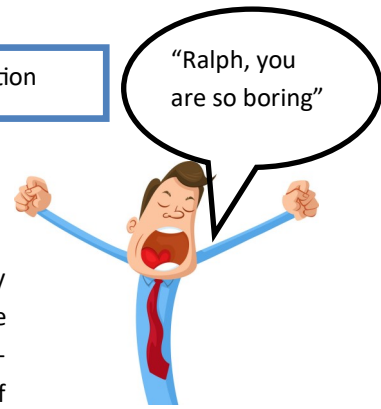
Photo History

Cover Picture



I loved this picture from the RA Summer exhibition

Before I carry on inserting more of my favourite pictures from this year's RA Summer Exhibition I thought I should (as has become my tradition) of airing a few of my thoughts (to bore any readers)



AI has been , quite rightly, getting a great deal of media coverage recently, and if anyone reads my notes over the years it is evident that I have always been 'concerned' about the way in which we are under surveillance and being manipulated. AI is growing exponentially and even the people involved in its introduction are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers. . Yes, I am both guilty of enjoying its many benefits but that is how it gets a rapid foothold worldwide. What concerns Lynn and myself is the way in which it can, and will, be used by people, governments and others with less than altruistic motives. I can cite many obvious dangers and with 'machine learning ' where computers train and develop the next generation of computers, mankind can soon be superfluous. OK, many will say, that will never happen...man will always be required.. Remember you read it here first...or maybe your bot read it here first.

A few random thoughts.

- As billions of internet sources are trawled to obtain data , inevitably a vast amount of ' unacceptable' data will be included and this is being sifted and removed mainly by humans (at the moment). This must be totally devastating to these 'sifters' and anyway who gives them the right, or the ability, to be censors of what is available to us.
- Facial expressions and reactions to speech are powering many hidden uses by AI and soon (if not already) machines can determine our 'supposedly' hidden thoughts.
- Brain scans show how we react to stimuli and again this is a part of our very being that maybe should still not be in the public realm.
- Whole areas of creativity such as poetry, art and language generally can now be reproduced by AI and this is already so advanced that it is impossible to distinguish the difference.
- Speech and language are well represented by various programmes and I am sure there are so many valid instances where a situation goes very wrong and there are no obvious ways for the general public to speak to a person of authority...or a decision maker, to rectify the problem. I know that many will say that AI is in its infancy and , of course I agree. They will say that all programmes have glitches and these 'glitches' are easily rectified by AI. However, what about the hypothesis that maybe a programme is devised to be totally without any means of rectifying any problem arising with the intention of ,say, fraud, or even a more menacing scenario that is deliberately written to be malicious for gain or dominance
- There must be a rational NOW to enable thinking people to put the brakes on development 'behind closed doors'. Obviously commercial sensitivity factors will be cited for secrecy, but the general principle must be established world wide before it is too late.

I reiterate, nothing will, or should, stop the development of AI but controls must be put in place to ensure that personal freedom is not lost.

If not, the genie is out of the bottle , and mankind will never be the same again.

Easy to scoff and say that my thoughts are ludicrous, sensationalist and maybe I hope you are right...but I have the courage to write them down and how many of you are willing to risk putting yourself in the firing line to be ridiculed at a future date...

I do hope I won't say ..."see I told you so" ...maybe I won't be around to say that but my sentiments and thoughts remain..

End of my rant and now for some family news and the more wonderful interesting pictures





## Photo History



August '23..Tammy and Larnie are so close and Larnie, living and working (mostly) from home means they spend a lot of quality time together. Larnie just phones us out of the blue to arrange times when she can come here and often 'places' her dinner order

in advance. Her evenings here are then spent with Lynn and Larnie concentrating on their very intense Scrabble games. A great fun time. Lynn runs daily (weather permitting) in Groveland's and uses the exercise bike upstairs when weather is bad. I think she's great and on our combined Park Run she finds my (extremely slow) pace too restricting, so she runs off and completes the 5k well ahead of me. It is my 17th run this week so my (constantly last) position is coveted.

DP has been busy at quite a few festivals but his very popular and well attended festival: Shindig has been problematic as so many unexpected expenses ate into the takings causing a rethink for future events. He is moving his boat from Bristol harbour later this year, to a dry dock where he hopes to refit the interior to allow Beau and girlfriend to live on it. Lynn and I may well go on the boat in November as unpaid 'crew!!' during the move

Angela is still active and took quite a few youngsters to stay on her meadow overnight. This is such a great thing to do and obviously was a difficult undertaking but it all went well and it got a great feedback.

Peachy is off to Barcelona with a friend next week staying a few days with Dimitri (an old long time school-friend of DP's) who now lives there with his family. Peachy is very grown up now and is a lovely girl (young lady!) who actually sent her old Grandma and Grandpa a postcard from when she went to Harris with family a few weeks ago..

Beau is also very busy and also went with Angela and Peachy to Harris recently and is enjoying life too.

I am doing less with tree work volunteering at the moment but still get involved in tree survival surveys to check how many newly planted ones have survived and Lily and I work together collating results. She also is helping me maintaining and updating our 'Friends of Enfield Chase website. Lynn and I still see, and enjoy, the company of our many friends, many of whom, have amazingly been our friends for nearly all our lives. Together with our new acquaintances and friends we find the social life really rewarding and we really value this.

Indeed, I have just come back from a coffee morning at a local garden centre café with maybe a dozen early-morning swimming friends. This takes place monthly and is a very enjoyable couple of hours.

I got a certificate in the post yesterday confirming that I am now an accredited leader for groups of volunteers with river and water based activities along the Thames. The other volunteering role I have just entered into is a 'cow watcher'. This is keeping an eye on the red poll cows that are experimentally allowed to graze at Forty Hall. They will have tags around their necks which gives them a gentle shock if they stray from a given grazing area. We will have an app showing where they are. If this experiment is successful, they will also be grazing at Trent Park and Whitwebbs. Our duties will include keeping an eye out for distressed cows (however, at the moment I have no idea what a distressed cow actually looks like.) It will probably be a PR exercise where we explaining to the public what the red poll grazing is all about. I am awaiting my instruction lessons.

I am still busy with these Photo History volumes and as they progress it is so encouraging to see Tammy, Lynn, DP and Larnie, actually looking through them. I really hope they will be continued in one way or another to maintain a family and world/local history. As they are a true and honest reflection of thoughts, politics and events etc from a personal viewpoint they will be a 'Samuel Pepys'-type diary of life at a given period.

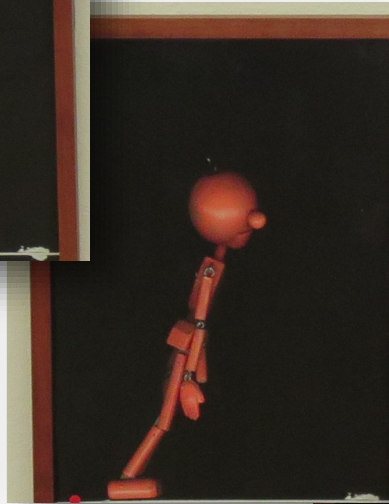
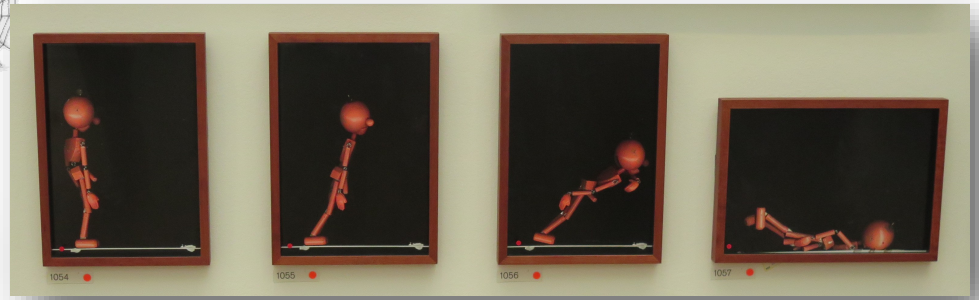
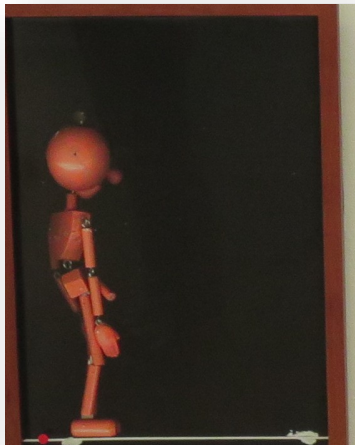
AI and The Ukraine and the vast numbers of refugees entering the UK, legally, and illegally, dominate our news and recent climate change weather situations causing floods, wild fires and many world wide disasters are surely a very worrying glimpse into a future where a united world front must be a priority to face, and effect, these situations, that will change the status quo.. World leaders must ALL unite to take the dangers seriously and the prevailing attitude of self interest must be put in the background and world interest be brought to the fore. Here, massive price rises and the decline in the standing of the UK are only the tip of the iceberg

Lynn and I are totally discouraged by politics and really don't feel that anyone in power represent us, and our views, and we feel, and constantly see, that there is so much corruption and lack of interest in the wider community that whatever party 'so called' representing us are of the same background and attitudes and despite election promises and manifestos these are quickly forgotten and nothing comes out of it.

As I have said before...this is my way of expressing my feelings so who needs a psychiatrist ... The volume continues...







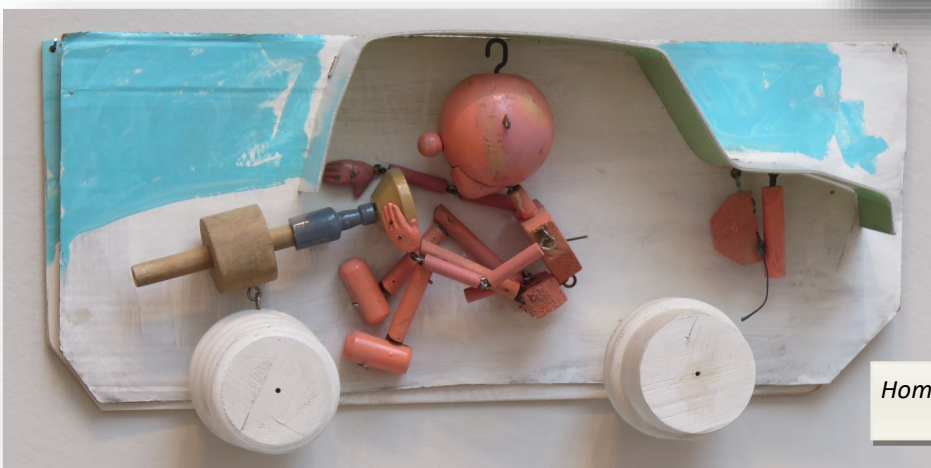
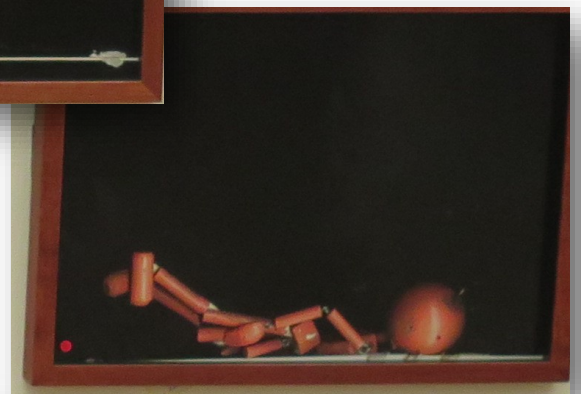
### Maybe a reverse lesson in evolution.

*Homo erectus*: Man is erect

*Homo bendus*: Man leans forward

*Homo tipsup*: Man collapses

*Homo totallypissed*: Man falls over...



*Homo menace*: Man speeds in car..





## Photo History

No semblance of order. The only common denominator is that I like them all

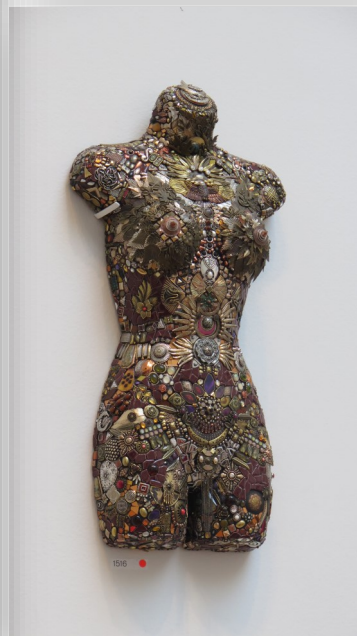
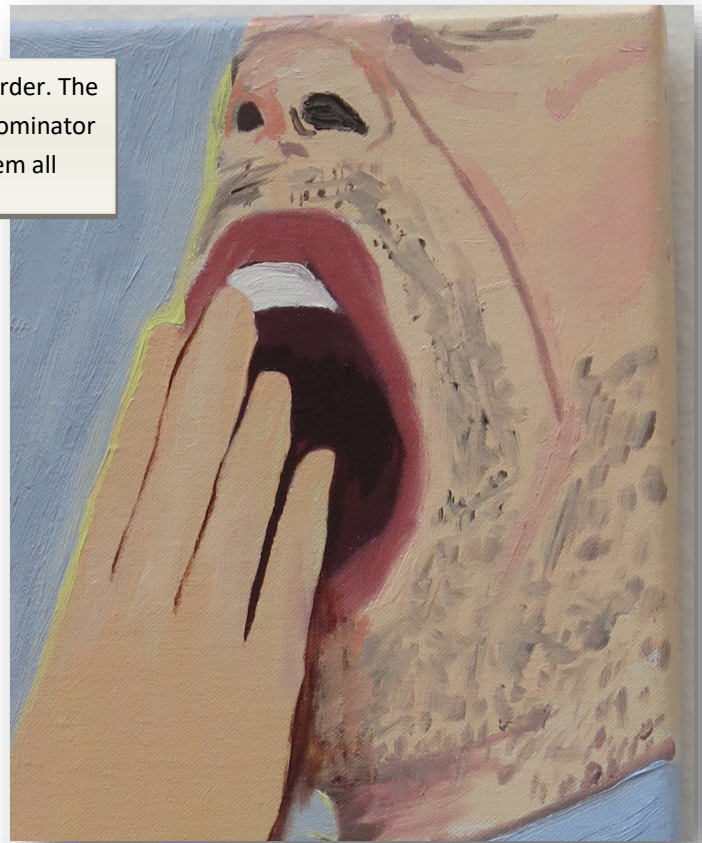










Photo History



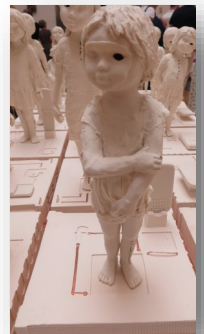
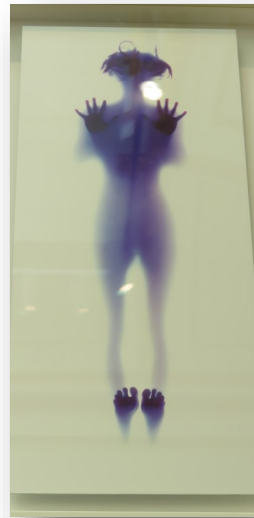




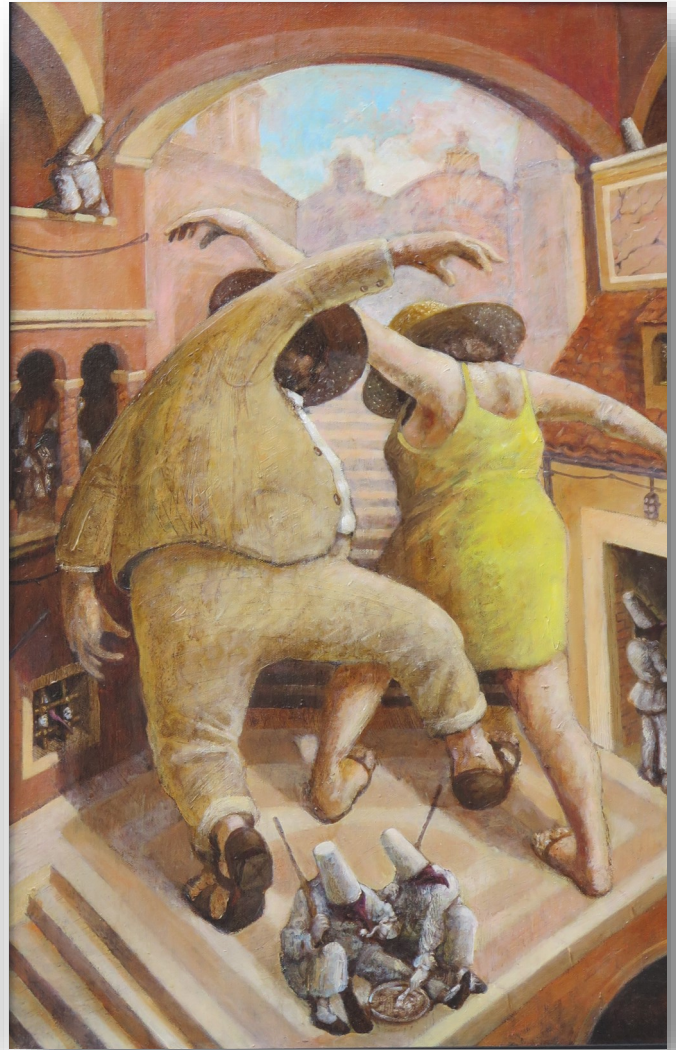




Photo History



















## Photo History

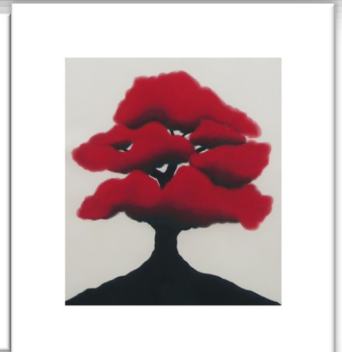
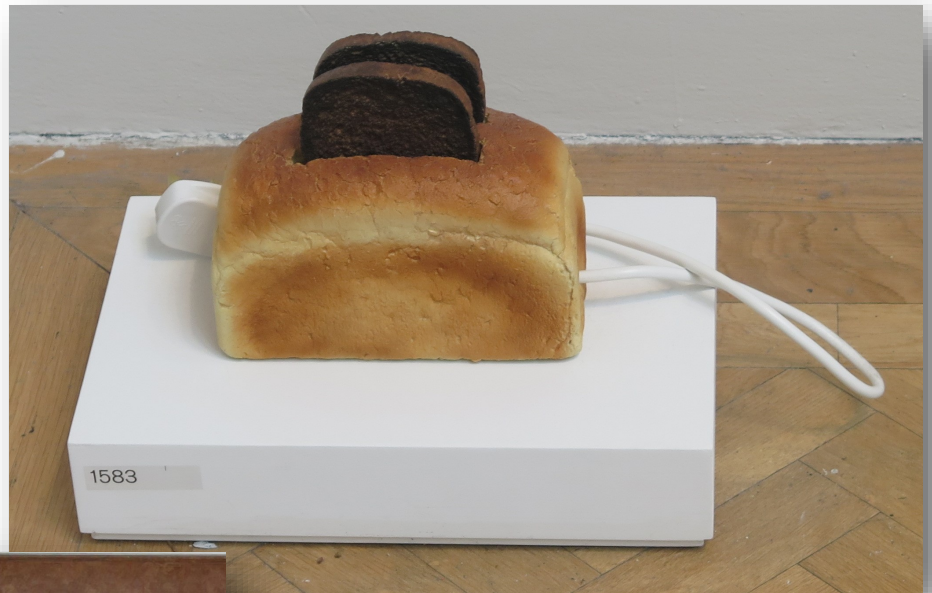
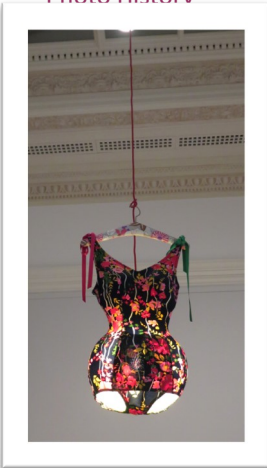




















Photo History



















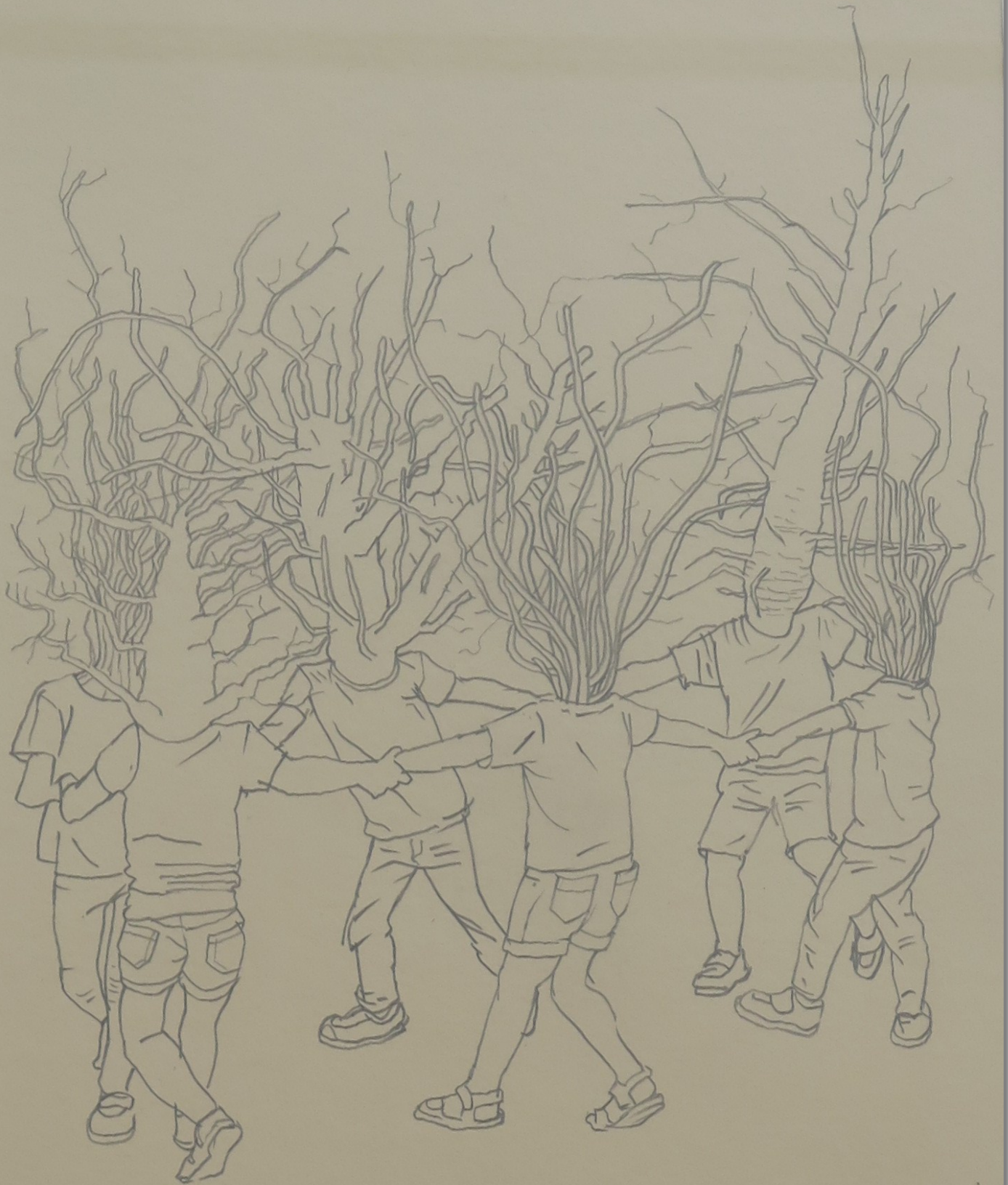
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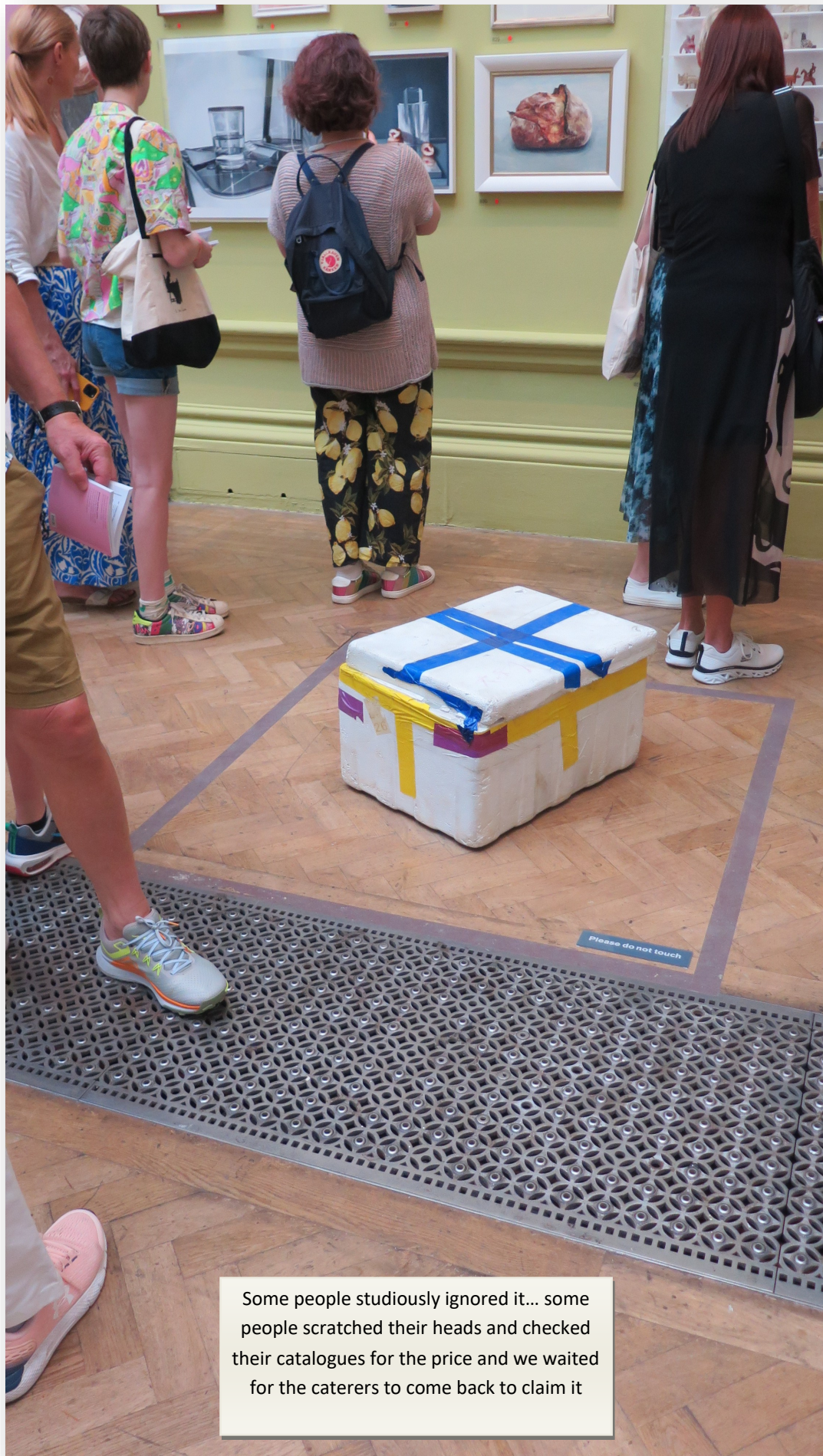




2022

Joe Magee





Some people studiously ignored it... some people scratched their heads and checked their catalogues for the price and we waited for the caterers to come back to claim it





## Photo History



Well, she's smiling so I  
guess she must have  
secretly enjoyed it

You will probably be delighted to hear  
that this is the end of this year's 'Pictures  
That Ralph Found Interesting'.

Maybe you even found some you liked??  
Well there's no accounting for taste!







## Photo History

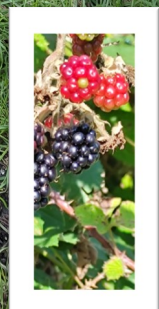
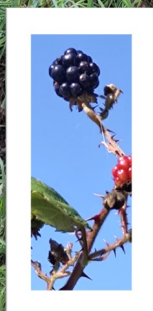
All that's left of an abandoned car opposite. Vegetation soon takes over and makes the ugly attractive







This year with sunny spells and a great deal of rain, our blackberry gathering was a fruitful and very prickly experience (note Lynn's hands and these were only two of several bags full







We have found an area of fascinating 'ants nests' which we believe are very rare. The area is hidden from most people and not really disturbed. I have videoed them and they are a totally active home. They don't seem to fit into any category I can find out about. Here are some photos



The average colony contains 100,000 to 500,000 workers and up to several hundred winged forms and queens. Queen ants can live 7 years or more, while worker ants generally live about 5 weeks, although they can survive much longer.



### *Lasius umbratus*

This ant starts their own nests/colonies when the newly mated *umbratus* queen infiltrates an already established nest of *Lasius niger*. Once the *umbratus* queen produces her own workers, they will build quite elaborate nests, similar to *Lasius flavus*.



The yellow meadow ant, builds complex nests, and are some of the most skilled of nest makers within the British species. They are rarely seen above-ground, preferring to forage for food underground, within the soil into which they are nesting. Often, they will build mounds, especially if the colony has been well established for a number of years. These mounds can have various forms of vegetation growing on them, which can help mask their obvious presence. The seeds that have produced the vegetation on their mounds have probably been dropped/blown on the soil of their mounds by various natural methods. They have foraging habits.







Photo History



**Even though this branch  
is closing, we're still  
able to offer support.**



**Nice to  
see you**



Thank you to  
all our Friends  
and supporters



**We're sorry to say this NatWest  
Southgate  
branch will be closing on  
5th October 2023.**



I think its important to chronicle the rapid closing of all our high street banks. This is due to on-line banking making the traditional banks expensive to maintain.

I know when we look back at these pictures we will remember the banks in a sad and nostalgic way









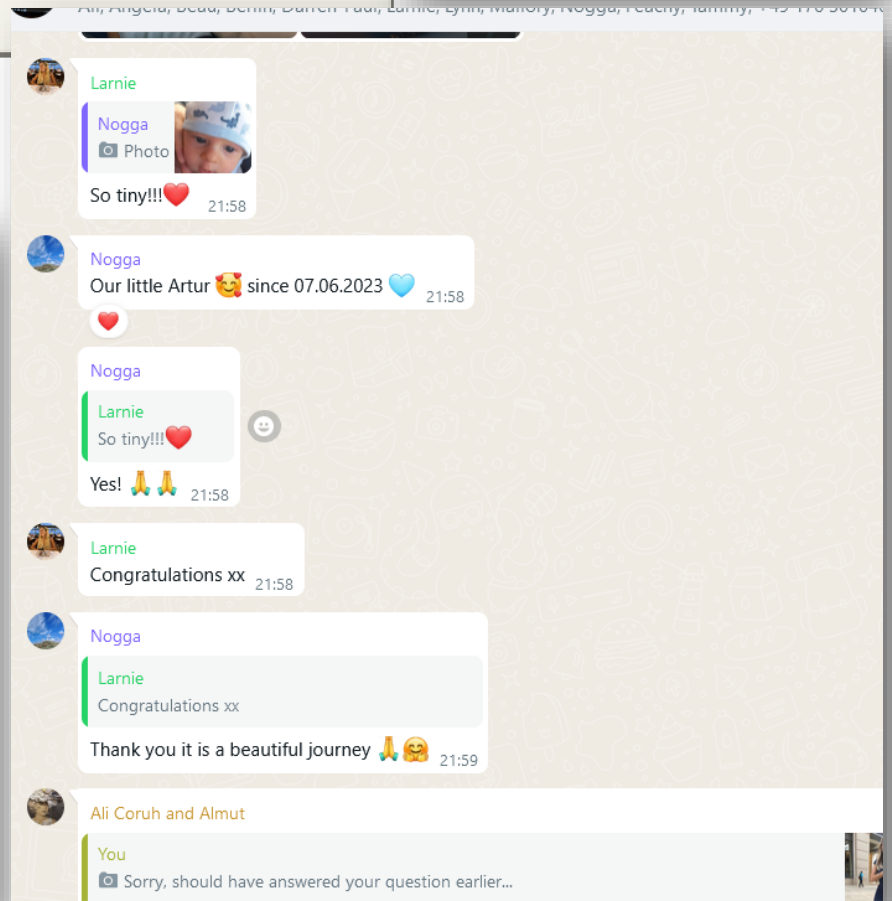


## Photo History



Ima  
Anruf

We communicate across vast areas with our lovely family via WhatsApp: Angela, Beau and Peachy in Somerset, Mallory in Jerusalem, Ali and Almuth in Berlin (sometimes in Istanbul) Renana, and Adam and Sinai and Manu in Berlin, Tammy and Larnie in London, Lynn and myself (also in London). DP in Bristol, We are all so close it's fantastic and here, Nogga and Adam in Berlin send us photos of new arrival Artur







## A Daft Conversation

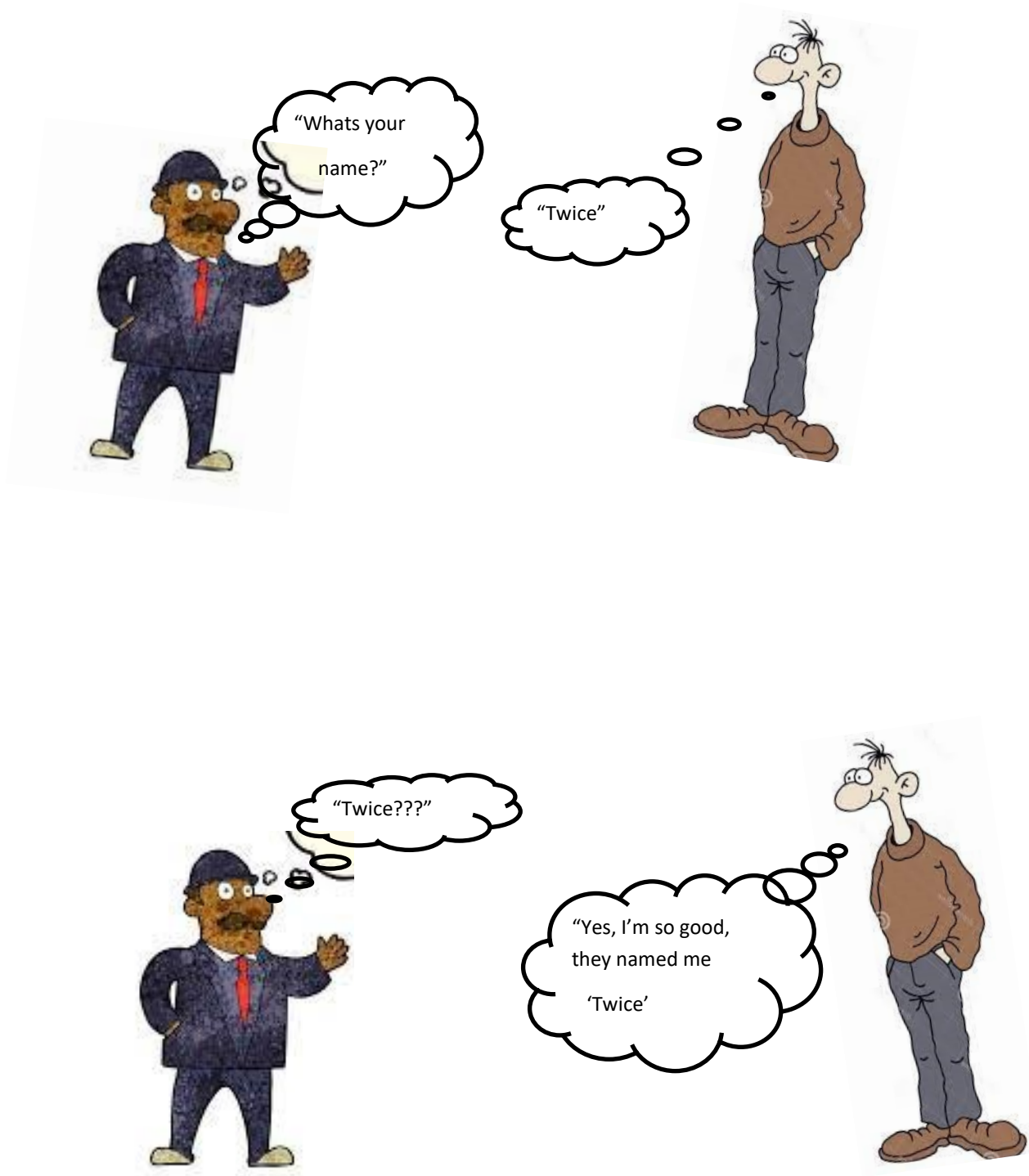






Photo History



We managed to rebook so hopefully the weather will be kind to us (and the cast!)



The only trouble with booking an outdoor theatre production in the UK in August is this...







This photo may already be in an earlier volume but I think it is so happy...it's here again



Our Special Kids ...January  
2023



...more smiles...







## Photo History



Tree planting is not possible as the trees are not dormant but there are many other 'duties'. Here we are in Rectory Road Farm doing a tree survival check. Out of approx. 420 tree saplings checked, 108 appeared to have 'failed'.

John and Andrew planning today's area- where we will be checking survival rates



One of our many successes



This path through the undergrowth has been strimmed by Andrew in advance so we can access the whips more easily

Lily setting the marker point for this sample



We work in twos and take an area each to cover the field

On a lovely day like this it is a really wonderful and useful day in the country



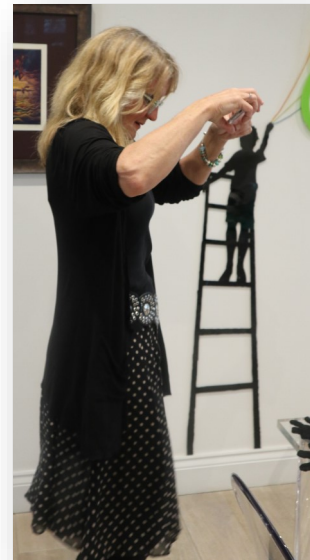




## Photo History



What a wonderful spot we chose to remember our dear friend Alison. The white hornbeam we planted has just bloomed and the view from the spot we chose is so fitting, as we all worked happily together here







## Understanding Ice Cream

Chocolate rippled sweet and salt caramel layered cookie ice cream with coloured sprinkles and thick chocolate sauce and oodles of whipped cream..

.....when we were younger this would sound like total ecstasy. Maybe, one of the things about getting old is being able to stand back and reflect on what we really appreciate.

In actual fact that ice cream concoction never did live up to its inflated description and we always thought afterwards.." *never again..too yucky, too sweet etc..*" ..... anyway never again until next time.

Maturity, age, call it what you like, has given us the 'wisdom' to say.." *no thank you, just a vanilla ice made with real vanilla extract..nothing else*"

This is a metaphor for how we now view life and appreciate everything around us for what it is really all about.

Friends are irreplaceable and take such an important place in our lives.

These friendships are sometimes really long standing, maybe even from school days and some are new friendships with people of different ages and backgrounds that we feel so comfortable with. The old friendships and the new ones are equally important to us

A recent conversation with a relatively new friend said how great it was to meet up and just chat over a coffee with no angst, no animosity, no showing off..just friends for friendships sake.

The plain vanilla relationships are so much more satisfying than ones based on hidden agendas and multicoloured sprinkles.

Food and restaurants seem to play a large part in our lives.

Maybe it's our background but hospitality is such a joy and so enjoyable but the food is less important than the gelling of the guests, the relaxed conversation, the retelling of experiences.. even if we've heard them all many times before. We are so aware that we also repeat our stories.

(cont/d)







We can eat out in very smart and expensive restaurants and sometimes not enjoy the food as much as in very simple basic cafes and family eateries.

Yes, sometimes the ambience makes it a special occasion but one often finds that one is looking for excellence when paying a great deal and that is sometimes sadly lacking.

Home cooking invariably is more enjoyable than a meal out which is possibly why I am known to always order some dish that I have not eaten before and why I am so often very disappointed.

Holidays are a planned and often well researched undertaking but again we find a chance meeting with people or a fascinating place we came across unexpectedly remains in our memory banks far longer than those 'must visit' places

We are lucky to have travelled widely but the vanilla ice cream delight of enjoying a country walk in England with a ploughman's in a country pub beats all the sprinkles on that mouth watering frozen delight

Yes, age, maturity has given us the ability to decide what matters to us. ..and I say 'us' because one of the total joys of such a long marriage is that the delicious vanilla ice cream is something that we have realised we both really love best of all.

R

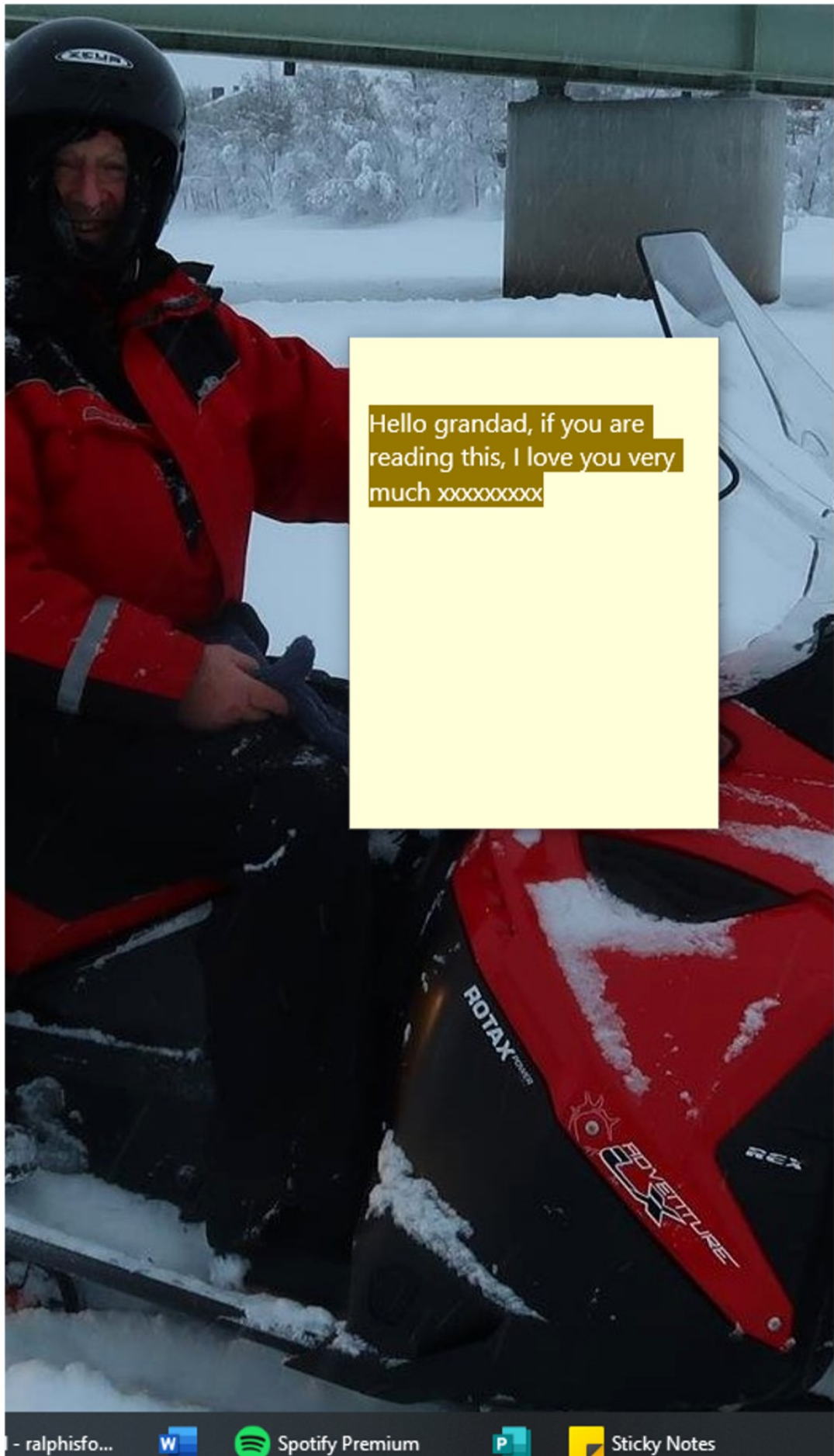
August 2023 (aged 79)



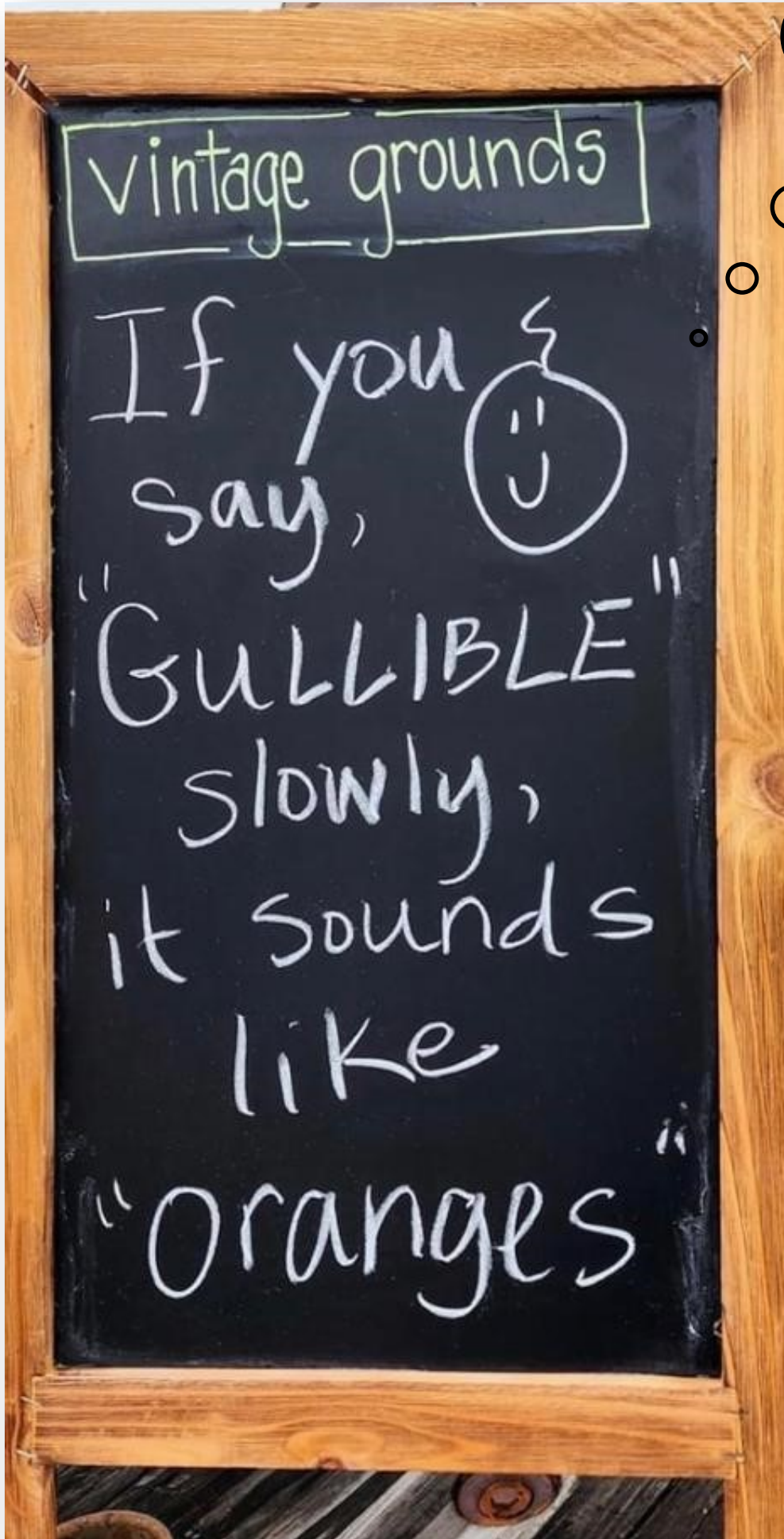




Larnie came over last night for dinner and her 'high—powered' Scrabble game with Lynn. We so love these evenings together. They are really special and when I got up this morning I found this message on my computer screen...











## In Thoughtful Mode

I seem to get thoughtful when I'm in 'bed-time' mode.

My book lies open ready to be enjoyed but my mind is elsewhere.

Maybe having a busy life this winding down period of the day is my way of relaxing and as my mind seems elsewhere, maybe I'll give up on reading tonight.

I think that as our lives are getting towards our 80th decade, the inevitable thought of 'how much longer have we got' is constantly there. This is not in any way a sad or macabre thought but really a period (in my case anyway) of taking stock.

No one (yet, to the best of my knowledge!) goes on for ever so facing reality is sensible.

No, we don't dwell on dying but obviously we realise that our remaining time is limited.

We are seeing long-loved friends deteriorating health-wise and it is so sad..not just for them but even more sadly, for the remaining partner. Nursing a loved partner for any reason takes a lot of courage and is not how any of us imagined life to be.

We are very very happy together and we often talk about how it will be, being without the other person. Of course that person will be so deeply missed and never replaced. The remaining partner will obviously be very sad but strong enough to continue, because we have discussed it and realise that this is inevitable. ..but what does concern us more is the possibility of one of us becoming senile

of Alzheimer's or similar dementia is such a worry.

What it must be like to see your lifelong love alongside you but not recognising you, or not reacting and behaving in the same way you have loved for so long, must be devastating, and neither of us want that to happen

I know this must sound so sad and negative but it is like the 'elephant in the room' and what makes us rejoice is that we still have good health, a special deep love for one .....

.....another, and laughter and enjoyment of life now.

We have both worked hard and often had problems as life progressed, but the bitter makes the sweet even more enjoyable.

We determine to make the most of life and in our simple way, we are now living our dream.

Not necessarily great holidays, meals out or theatres etc, although we obviously enjoy those. What we do enjoy is laughing together..and we do that a lot: breakfast coffee in the garden at our canary yellow table in the pool of sunlight with the fountain gurgling and the goldfish darting in the water bubbles: tea and a bacon sarnie(with brown sauce) in a cafe: walking along a river or canal and enjoying gathering elderflowers or blackberrying and getting scratched to pieces.

All these simple pleasures add up to fulfilment and I realise that after all these years that this fulfilment is the ultimate we can hope for and achieve.

It's not the accumulation of wealth in the traditional form, it's the knowledge that one has reached a time in life when one can actually say we have accumulated such non material wealth that we want to pass this accumulated knowledge on to our family and friends knowing it will filter through to future generations.

We feel that despite being very far from perfect, we hope we have still managed to give guidance, morals and good values to our family by example

Our fantastic family make everything so worth while and this pleasure is not something that can be bought. It is a natural thing and is like a rare plant..something that is nurtured and blossoms after years of care and nourishment.

We are so lucky and very aware that this blessing and joy will pass through our family nurturing this great feeling through future generations.

I'm sorry, this just came out of my 'not reading ' time and maybe these thoughts were in the back of my mind...so better out than in, I guess.

Anyway, as I said, this in no way should be read as a sad or morbid essay.

It is just a written note saying what many folk must think, but never ever put into print..

Big smiles from one very happy and contented (but not complacent) man

R

August 23





Setting up on the Broomfield  
Park Bandstand for an August  
Jazz blues session











## Photo History



Kangnam Pocha, Our favourite 'go-to' place in Drury Lane..small but full of surprises.(just like my missus)







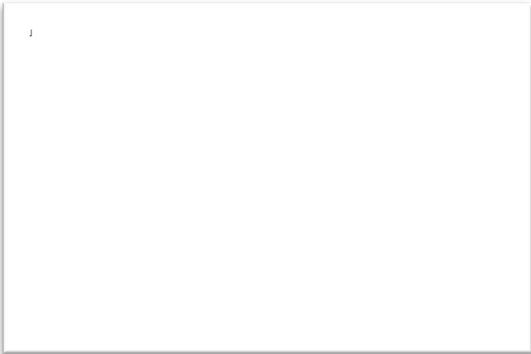
Couldn't resist him







Lovely Ladies who lunch







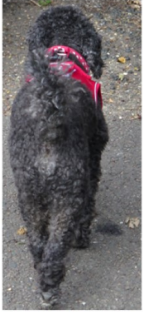
... "Yes, I sometimes  
feel totally boxed in"







## Photo History



August 2023...The  
Lads' walk along the  
Lee Navigation and  
the Lee Park near  
Nazeing



..looking back through this book I feel that maybe it shows an eclectic  
mindset or possible the onset of something that may need medical  
intervention. Anyway, leave me alone and I'll play for hours